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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. BURTON of Indiana].

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

April 24, 1997.

I hereby designate the Honorable DAN BURTON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

From the early morning Sun until the going down of the same, we express our thanksgiving, O gracious God, for the many gifts of life that You freely give to us each day. We know that You look upon us not as we deserve, but You forgive us and give us new life and bless us along life's way. For Your amazing grace, for Your wonderful gifts, O God, for all the heavenly hosts who are witness to Your gifts, for all the people who encourage us and for all the people we are privileged to serve, we offer this prayer of gratitude and praise. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. BOB

SCHAFFER] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 one-minutes on each side.

PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE ORDER WOULD LINE THE POCKETS OF UNION CONTRACTORS

(Mr. NORWOOD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, what would the American public say about Congress if we tried to exclude 90 percent of American workers from Government contracts? They would have our heads, and rightly so. But with a stroke of his pen the President wants to do just that, to pay off his friends at the AFL-CIO. The President wants to sign an Executive order that would make sure that all the hard-earned tax dollars Americans send to Washington for Federal construction projects go only to union contractors.

It does not matter if a nonunion contractor can do a better or a less expensive job. It does not matter that this order would exclude 90 percent of the working families of this country. That is just too bad. Only union contractors will get your tax dollars, even if it costs more than a nonunion firm.

Does that make any sense? Of course not, but apparently the President thinks it is more important to line the pockets of the union bosses.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the President to reconsider this absurdly unfair, costly, and absurdly un-American order.

MEDICARE'S IMPENDING INSOLVENCY, REPUBLICANS' INACTION

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, today the Medicare trustees will release the latest numbers on Medicare's impending insolvency. The Republicans are in the majority, so what is their solution? Instead of passing legislation to fix the trust fund, they have wasted the last 2 years trying to ram through deep Medicare cuts to finance tax breaks for the wealthy.

Last week Republican leaders argued for an additional \$30 billion in Medicare cuts. The Medicare legislation that the Republicans passed in the last Congress would have forced seniors to pay double premiums for lesser quality care.

The Republicans fought the Medicare Program when it was created under Democratic control, and now they are relishing the opportunity to let it die under their watch.

PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, the American people are best served by open competition, whether for goods, services, or for construction. This has always led to lower costs, higher quality, innovation, and efficiency.

The Executive order of President Clinton that he has promised his important labor friends ignores all these principles and imposes a near monopoly on the source of construction labor. Under union-only contracts Federal work would be restricted to a small minority of the work force that is unionized and would deny work to the majority of workers who, for religious, economic, or other personal reasons, choose not to work under union control.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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